

GTP/US 3183

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applic. No. : 09/917,541 Confirmation No. 9996
Applicant : Katrin Reisinger
Filed : July 27, 2001
Title : Mailing Machine and Initialization Method
Group Art Unit : 3621
Examiner : Daniel L. Greene

Docket No. : GTP/US 3183
Customer No. : 24131

REPLY BRIEF

Hon. Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

S i r :

This is a Reply Brief responding to the Examiner's Answer
mailed January 12, 2006.

Arguments:

On August 29, 2005, Appellant's received an Order Returning Undocketed Appeal to Examiner (the "Order") and a Notice of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief dated August 25, 2005. The Order, returned the application to the Examiner to: "1)hold the Appeal Brief of March 28, 2005 defective; 2) for applicant to file a Supplemental Appeal Brief in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 41.37; and 3) for the examiner to provide a Supplemental Examiner's Answer incorporating the required section 'References of Record.' Said Supplemental Examiner's Answer must correspond to the Supplemental Appeal Brief,". On November 4, 2005 Appellant filed a Response to Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief and the required new Brief on Appeal (the "Supplemental Appeal Brief"). In the Supplemental Appeal Brief, Appellant additionally addressed the issues raised in the earlier Examiner's Answer.

In response to Appellant's new Brief on Appeal, an Examiner's Answer was mailed on January 12, 2006 (the "Examiner's Answer"). Appellant notes that the Examiner's Answer appears to duplicate, word for word, the Examiner's Answer dated May 11, 2005, in the instant case. As such, the Examiner's Answer does not provide the material requested by the Board. More particularly, the Examiner's Answer neither provides the requested section "References of Record", nor does it correspond to Appellant's Supplemental Appeal Brief, as

Applic. No. 09/917,541

Response Dated March 13, 2006

Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

required by the Order. The Examiner's Answer does not address the arguments made in the Supplemental Appeal Brief addressing the previous Examiner's Answer.

As such, Appellant comments as follows with respect to the Examiner's Answer:

On page 3 of the Examiner's Answer, it is stated:

"Leon discloses the system components as per the prior Office Action except for the removable authorization device. However, Leon does disclose as per Col. 37, lines 48 - 50, that the Secure Meter Device (SMD) can further include an input interface circuit that couples to an input element. The input element can be a switch, a push button, a key, or the like. The Examiner submits that teaching of the use of an external input element provides the motivation/bridge to incorporate the use of a dongle and/or cryptographic key stored on a token as taught by the second reference Vu in the prior 103 Office Action."

Appellant respectfully disagrees with the above statement from the Examiner's Answer.

First, as stated in the Supplemental Appeal Brief, neither of the cited references, U. S. Patent No. 6,424,954 to Leon "(LEON)" or U. S. Patent No. 6,557,104 to Vu et al ("VU"), teach or suggest, among other limitations: (1) "a removable authorization device operationally connected to the mailing machine and configured to be interrogated by the mailing machine ; and (2) the security module programmed to check

Applic. No. 09/917,541

Response Dated March 13, 2006

Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

whether authorization is present and for preventing an initialization of the mailing machine without authorization as recited in independent claim 1 of the instant application. Appellant's independent method claim 18 contains similar features.

Further, Appellant maintains its previous argument that, absent impermissible hindsight reconstruction, there is no motivation in either LEON or VU to combine those references to arrive at Appellant's claimed invention. More particularly, there is no motivation in LEON or VU to add a method or apparatus for secure processing of cryptographic keys, as taught in VU, to the postal system of LEON.

Specifically addressing the portion of LEON cited in the Examiner's Answer, col. 37, lines 48 - 50 of LEON do not provide motivation to provide, among other limitations of Appellant's claims, a removable authorization device, authorization from which is necessary for initialization of the mailing machine, as required by Appellant's claims 1 and 18. Initialization, in the context of claims 1 and 18, is explained in the specification of the instant application. For example, paragraph [0012] describes initialization as follows:

Applic. No. 09/917,541

Response Dated March 13, 2006

Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

"Initialization is understood as meaning a routine for the input of initialization data taking place on one occasion at the single point of entry of the destination country before the machine is put into operation. For this purpose, a means of authorization is brought into operative connection with the mailing machine and is designed as an easily exchangeable electronic hardware unit (dongle or chip card). The latter is connected to the mailing machine either directly or indirectly via a data source, for example a personal computer PC. The mailing machine, for example a franking machine, has an unremovable program memory with an initialization program and a postal security module (postal security device or secure accounting device), which is designed as a means of checking the authorization of the input of initialization data. The latter takes place, when there is authorization, directly by using the keyboard of the franking machine or indirectly via the PC or laptop or from a data center into the meter or security module. The means of authorization, i.e., the authorization device, is brought into operative connection with the meter via interfaces of the PC or the machine. "

For example, paragraph [0007] of the instant application states:

"The object of the present invention is to provide a mailing machine which overcomes the above-noted deficiencies and disadvantages of the prior art devices and methods of this general kind, and which is provided with a ROM module with an initialization program, initialization data being introduced in a secure manner into the mailing machine via an externally accessible interface, so that unauthorized initializing is prevented. It is further intended that a secure method will manage without exchanging the ROM module and permit authorized initialization."

[emphasis added by Appellant]

The section of LEON cited in the Examiner's Answer as motivating a combination of LEON with VU to, allegedly, teach Appellant's claimed invention has absolutely nothing to do

Applic. No. 09/917,541
Response Dated March 13, 2006
Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

with initializing the mailing machine, as does the removable authorization device of Appellant's claims. Rather, Col. 37 of LEON, lines 48 - 50, read in the entire context of lines 47 - 60, reads as follows:

"Referring back to FIG. 2A, SMD 150 can further include an input interface circuit 236 that couples via signal line 237 to an input element 238. Input element 238 can be a switch, a push button, a key, or the like. When input element 238 is activated (i.e., by pushing on a print control key), SMD 150 of metering device 110a performs the Indicium transaction. SMD 150 generates an indicium having a predetermined value and directs printer 152 to dispense the indicium. SMD 150 updates its revenue registers when the indicium is generated. SMD 150 generates the indicium when requested and as long as the funds in the revenue registers are sufficient to cover the indicium value. Otherwise, the metering device can indicate a failed Indicium transaction via, for example, a blinking light emitting diode (LED)." [emphasis added by Appellant]

As such, the input element 238 of LEON, cited by the Examiner as the motivation to combine LEON with an external "authorization device" as claimed by Applicants, does not relate to providing an authorization, based upon which the mailing machine is initialized, as required by Applicants' claims, but, rather, is merely a push button or key used for printing the indicium (i.e., the postage slip). Rather, LEON addresses initialization of the device in LEON in col. 13, lines 22 - 60, as follows:

Initialization transaction: An Initialization transaction prepares the SMD for operation. The following is a specific implementation of the Initialization transaction, and other implementations are available.

Applic. No. 09/917,541

Response Dated March 13, 2006

Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

FIG. 5B shows a flow diagram of an embodiment of the Initialization transaction. At a step 520, the SMD is prepared for the Initialization transaction. This preparation can comprise installing a FIT flag located on the SMD. The Crypto-Officer then, via a host PC, sends the SMD an initialization request message that includes the Provider X.509 certificate and the device ID number, at a step 522. This request message is signed using the provider's private key. The SMD receives and validates the request message, at a step 524.

The SMD accepts a request to perform an Initialization transaction if it is in an Uninitialized or Initialized state. This determination is performed at a step 526. If the SMD receives a request to perform an Initialization transaction and the FIT flag is not installed or if the SMD is not in the Uninitialized or Initialized state, the SMD ignores the request and the transaction terminates. The validation of the request message includes verification of the signature in the request message using the provider's public key from the Provider X.509 certificate, at a step 528. If the signature is invalid, the SMD sends an error message, at a step 530, and the transaction terminates.

If the signature is valid, the SMD saves the Provider X.509 certificate provided in the request message, at a step 532. The DSA (digital signature algorithm) parameters *p*, *q*, and *r* are then loaded into the SMD, at a step 534. The SMD uses these parameters to generate a pair of public and provide keys, at a step 536. The SMD retains the private key in secrecy and exports the public key. The SMD sends the host PC a signed message that includes the SMD's public key, at a step 538. This message is signed using the SMD's private key and can be verified by the host PC using the SMD's public key that is included in the message. The SMD then transitions to the Initialized state, at a step 540. Before an initialized SMD leaves the factory, the Crypto-Officer removes the FIT flag and seals the tamper-evident enclosure, at a step 542. [emphasis added by Appellant]

LEON teaches that before an initialized SMD (one containing the key) leaves the factory, the Crypto-Officer removes the

Applic. No. 09/917,541
Response Dated March 13, 2006
Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

FIT flag and seals the tamper-evident enclosure, at a step 542. As such, LEON fails to teach or suggest, or provide any motivation at all, for a removable authorization device, the point of which is to prevent an initialization of the mailing machine without authorization, as claimed by Appellant. The input element 238 of LEON has nothing to do with authorizing initialization (i.e., as defined in the instant specification) of the postal machine of LEON, as is required of the removable authorization device of Appellant's claims, but merely is used to print the frank, and thus, cannot be said to provide the motivation alleged by the Examiner.

Rather, the LEON reference describes a "funding transaction" which is performed when the indicium register is zero (i.e., no more funds are available for printing an indicium) which is allegedly closer to Appellant's claimed initialization. For example, , col. 37, lines 32 - 39 of LEON discloses a "funding transaction" described as follows:

"In the stand-alone mode, the metering device is capable of printing as many indicia (i.e., of a predetermined value) as allowed by the funds stored in the SMD. Once the SMD has expended the funds stored in its revenue registers, it can be loaded with additional funds by performing another Funding transaction. The metering device can then be re-coupled to the host PC for this Funding transaction, and disconnected again after the Funding transaction." [emphasis added by Appellant]

Applic. No. 09/917,541
Response Dated March 13, 2006
Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

Although described in connection with the embodiment that uses the input element 238, cited by the Examiner, the input element 238 of LEON is not used in the funding transaction. Rather, the teaching in col. 37, lines 48 - 50 of LEON, read in its entire context, merely provides a motivation for providing a push button or key to print franks (i.e. indicium), which must only necessarily occur after a funding transaction (arguendo, "initialization") has been completed.

As such, Appellant respectfully traverses the allegation in the Examiner's Answer that there is motivation in LEON for Appellant's particularly claimed authorization device.

Further, on page 4 of the Examiner's Answer, it is alleged that:

"The Appellant further argues that Leon is initializing a security module, not the mailing machine as recited in the instant claims. The Examiner submits that the mailing machine has a security module/section that must be initialized before it can function. The kind or type of equipment/machine that is initialized does not render an invention original, unique or non-obvious. The method incorporated to initialize a piece of equipment/machine is what is being presented and addressed in the prior Office Action." [emphasis added by Appellant]

However, as stated above, Appellant maintains that the LEON reference does not teach or suggest an authorization device, upon which initialization is based. The printing of an

Applic. No. 09/917,541
Response Dated March 13, 2006
Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

"indicium" (i.e., frank or mailing slip) of LEON does not entail "initialization", as claimed by Appellant.

Further, on page 5 of the Examiner's Answer, it is stated that:

"In reference to the Appellant's statement that, ' . . . there is no 'clear and particular teaching or suggestion in Leon to incorporate the features of Vu . . . ' the Examiner submits that Leon's [sic] discloses the use of an input element that includes a switch, a key or the like. Col. 37, liners 34-48 [sic]. Vu teaches about a type of key that could be used."

As discussed above, Appellant respectfully disagrees that LEON provides the alleged motivation. The input element of LEON is unrelated to initialization of the mailing machine, as required by Appellant's claims 1 and 18, but is merely used to print out the "indicium" (i.e., printing franks after a funding transaction/"initialization" has been completed). As such, Appellant believes that LEON truly fails to provide the alleged motivation for combining LEON with VU, to disclose Appellant's invention of claims 1 and 18.

Appellant further realleges and incorporates herein the arguments made in its Supplemental Appeal Brief relating to claims 1, 18, 4, 24 and 26.

Applic. No. 09/917,541
Response Dated March 13, 2006
Responsive to Examiner's Answer of January 12, 2006

Based on the above given arguments the honorable Board is
therefore respectfully urged to reverse the final rejection of
the Primary Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,



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March 13, 2006

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